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NSC BRIEFING

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22 July 1959

**CANCELLATION OF KHRUSHCHEV'S  
SCANDINAVIAN VISIT**

1. Khrushchev's abrupt cancellation early this week of his long-scheduled trip to Scandinavia is strange behavior. The whole thing has been handled in such an awkward and unconvincing manner that it raises the question whether the condition of Khrushchev's health does not enter the picture in some way.
  - A. The visit to Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland which was due to take place between 9 and 27 August has been scheduled since March.
    1. Preparations, including security arrangements, were well along and Khrushchev had even made plans to bring his wife and two daughters along.
  - B. The notes cancelling the visits, which were delivered to the Scandinavian governments on Sunday (19 July), complained petulantly that an unfriendly reaction to the visit in the Scandinavian countries had created an "unfavorable atmosphere," and cited specific critical comments in the Scandinavian press.
  - C. Khrushchev told Western newsmen in Warsaw on Tuesday that the program set up for him by the Scandinavians had not provided for real talks, "just a change of clothes." He said that the Scandinavians had "spit in his face."

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- D. The Scandinavian governments had, in fact, been unenthusiastic about the visit and many segments of the press and public, especially in Sweden, had been openly antagonistic.
- E. Moreover, the fact that some Scandinavian leaders recently expressed their opposition to the Soviet proposal for a nuclear-free zone in the Baltic area, together with the current negotiations on a free-trade area to include the Scandinavians, and possibly Finland, probably appeared to dim the prospects for real accomplishments in Khrushchev's visit.
  - 1. Scandinavians, caught by surprise, speculate that these diplomatic developments caused the cancellation.
  - 2. Finns naturally the most disturbed.
- II. Personal pique on Khrushchev's part, a characteristic which we have seen in him before, plus the lessened likelihood of reaping political capital from the visit undoubtedly figured to a good extent in the cancellation.
  - A. Additionally, it leaves Khrushchev free to make a bid for an early summit meeting--possibly during Vice President Nixon's visit.
  - B. Rumors in Moscow Khrushchev calling meeting of bloc leaders for first week in August--Scandinavian trip had been scheduled start 9 August.
  - C. But it is questionable whether those factors tell whole story.
    - 1. This is the first time that Khrushchev has cancelled a publicly-announced visit.
    - 2. He was not deterred by the many unfavorable comments which preceded his visit to England in 1956.
    - 3. He must have been aware that Scandinavian anti-Communists would raise a furor over the visit within the limits of Scandinavian decorum.

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